

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes ☒ no ☐

Property Name: Baltimore & Ohio Railroad - Philadelphia Branch Inventory Number: B-5168  
 Address: Runs north from O'Donnell St. to wye west of Bay View rail yard Historic district: yes ☒ no ☐  
 City: Baltimore Zip Code: 21224 County: Baltimore City  
 USGS Quadrangle(s): Baltimore East  
 Property Owner: CSX Transportation Tax Account ID Number: n/a  
 Tax Map Parcel Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Map Number: 26  
 Project: Red Line Transit Study - Bayview Extension Agency: MTA  
 Agency Prepared By: John Milner Associates, Inc.  
 Preparer's Name: Katherine Farnham Date Prepared: 2/8/2010  
 Documentation is presented in: See sources below.  
 Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: X Eligibility recommended \_\_\_\_\_ Eligibility not recommended \_\_\_\_\_  
 Criteria: X A X B X C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ Considerations: \_\_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G  
*Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:*  
 Name of the District/Property: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Inventory Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Eligible: \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ Listed: \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 Site visit by MHT Staff \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

This documentation covers a portion of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's Philadelphia Branch, constructed ca. 1883-1886, which ran north from Canton and then northeast toward Wilmington and Philadelphia. The section of the line being documented begins at O'Donnell St. and runs north and then northeast to a wye near the Bay View railroad yards. The line passes through a mostly industrial landscape, with the exception of the Greentown rowhouse neighborhood on the east side between Fait Ave. and Gough St.

Throughout the corridor from Canton to the wye, the B & O Railroad is elevated above grade. It is single-tracked from O'Donnell St. north to Gough St., where a double-track section begins. It returns to a single track at the Bay View Truss Bridge at the north end of the sector being evaluated. Within this corridor, the B & O Railroad passes over six bridges. These consist of one concrete beam bridge, three metal plate girder bridges, and two iron through-truss bridges. All are still in use by CSX Transportation.

Beginning at the south end of the section being documented, a single-track concrete beam bridge, constructed in 1953, carries the railroad across the eastern end of the O'Donnell St. bypass constructed at the same time. It is a simple concrete bridge with the date molded into the concrete flanking abutments on both sides. There is significant damage to the span and side abutments from

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 MHT Comments:

Jim Tullman ✓  
 Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services  
Bluntz  
 Reviewer, National Register Program

3/25/10  
 Date  
4/5/10  
 Date

truck strikes.

At Eastern Ave., the B & O crosses a small single-track metal girder bridge over the original right-of-way for Eastern Ave. This sector of roadway now provides access to the former Crown Cork & Seal plant. The bridge has rusticated stone abutments and dates from ca. 1880s. Following the construction of the Eastern Avenue Underpass in 1930, this bridge spanned a newly created entrance into the main buildings of Crown Cork & Seal.

Proceeding north, the railroad line then crosses a second metal girder bridge across the Eastern Avenue Underpass. This bridge has a single track but also includes a pedestrian walkway on the east side. It was built in 1930 when Eastern Ave. was lowered to eliminate railroad grade crossings. As with the other three bridges across the underpass, this one has concrete abutments and has been painted bright colors in recent years.

Further north at Lombard St., the railroad crosses over a double-track steel-plate girder bridge. This bridge, which has concrete slab abutments, was constructed in 1943, and is the only double-track bridge within the railroad sector being evaluated. The date is molded on the concrete abutments on either side.

The B & O line retains two important metal through-truss bridges, both constructed ca. 1885 when the Philadelphia Branch was built. Both bridges feature a single-track and are elevated to pass over other railroad lines. Both are examples of Whipple-Murphy through-truss bridges, and were documented in Zembala's Baltimore: Industrial Gateway on the Chesapeake (Zembala 1995:78-79). The first of these is the Highlandtown Truss Bridge, located where the B & O crosses over the Philadelphia, Wilmington, & Baltimore Railroad (PW & B) tracks near Gough St. The second, the Bay View Truss Bridge, is where the B & O crosses the Amtrak line toward the B & O wye west of the Bay View railroad yards. This wye is the intersection of the B & O's Canton-Philadelphia line with the B & O's Baltimore Belt Railroad from Mt. Royal Station (built in the 1890s), and marks the north end of the railroad segment being documented.

Prior to the 1880s, the B & O lacked its own connection to the Northeast, and instead negotiated permission to use the tracks belonging to the PW & B Railroad. B & O passenger trains going through Baltimore needed to transfer to the PW & B rails at President St. to exit the city to the east. This situation became increasingly intolerable. By 1880, the transfers were abandoned and the passenger trains were routed to Locust Point, where the B & O had a large shipping terminal, coal terminal, grain elevators, and piers. There, both passenger coaches and freight cars were placed aboard carferries and brought across the harbor to the B & O's Canton shipping facility, where they were transferred to the PW & B tracks. Two massive steam-powered ferries could each carry several cars at a time.

In 1883, access to the Northeast Corridor ended when the B & O's rival, the Pennsylvania Railroad, obtained the PW & B and rescinded the use of its tracks. The B & O was forced to construct its own line toward Philadelphia. The new Philadelphia Branch, completed on May 25, 1886, ran north from Canton and paralleled the former PW & B corridor as it headed northeast out of the city. In Canton, the B & O had established a busy waterfront shipping facility with grain elevators, and this became the southern terminus of the Philadelphia Branch. The carferry transfer between Canton and Locust Point remained in effect, but put the B & O at a competitive disadvantage due to the lack of a direct line through the city. The Pennsylvania Railroad had its own underground tunnel through the city, giving it a distinct advantage as rail traffic increased.

This situation was resolved in the 1890s with the construction of the B & O's new Baltimore Belt Railroad, which brought trains north through the Howard St. Tunnel to a new station at Mt. Royal, then north and east through smaller tunnels to connect with the Philadelphia Branch at a new wye junction near Bay View. Both passenger and freight trains were routed through the Baltimore Belt from 1896 onward, and the carferry transfers between Locust Point and Canton ended. Despite this, the southern portion of

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MHT Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer, National Register Program

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The Philadelphia Branch remained busy and Canton continued to expand and diversify its industrial and shipping facilities during much of the first half of the twentieth century. The B & O operated grain elevators at its Canton terminal, including one built in 1918.

Passenger rail service began to decline nationally following World War II, as automobile travel expanded. Passenger service on the B & O ended in 1958. The Philadelphia Branch was primarily a freight line once the carferry transfers ended. CSX currently owns and uses the line for freight traffic.

The B & O's Philadelphia Branch was an important link between the railroad's Canton shipping terminal, the Northeast Corridor, and the rest of the nation. It provided Canton with access to one of the two most important trunk rail systems in the nation, the other being the Northern Central. As such, the Philadelphia Branch directly contributed to the expansion of industry and shipping on the Canton waterfront during the half-century following its completion. Nearly 125 years later, the Philadelphia Branch remains in use for freight traffic. The portion being documented retains a high level of integrity. Although the setting has become more developed with the growth of the city and its industries, the Philadelphia Branch retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

In addition, the six bridges extant on this railroad sector are intact examples of different bridge types. Three of the bridges are original to the line. Viewed as a collection, they illustrate the sequence of bridge construction technology used on the B & O over the course of 70 years.

Due to both significance and integrity, the B & O Railroad's Philadelphia Branch, including its six bridges, is recommended eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The railroad had a direct and important influence on the industrialization of Canton during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also represents an intact and excellent example of an 1880s railroad alignment, as it exhibits a number of character-defining elements, including its elevated grade, stone retaining walls, and three original bridges. The two ca.1885 Whipple-Murphy truss bridges are rare survivors and have an extremely high level of significance; they may be eligible individually. This sector of railroad is not directly associated with persons of transcendent importance and does not appear to meet the requirements of National Register Criterion B. It was not evaluated for eligibility under National Register Criterion D during the historic architecture survey.

Sources:

P.A.C. Spero & Company. Historic Highway Bridges in Maryland: 1631-1960. Prepared for Maryland State Highway Administration, 1995.

Rukert, Norman G. Historic Canton: Baltimore's Industrial Heartland and its People. Baltimore: Bodine & Associates, Inc., 1978.

Stover, John F. History of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1987.

Zembala, Dennis M., ed. Baltimore: Industrial Gateway on the Chesapeake Bay. Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Industry, 1995.

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MHT Comments:

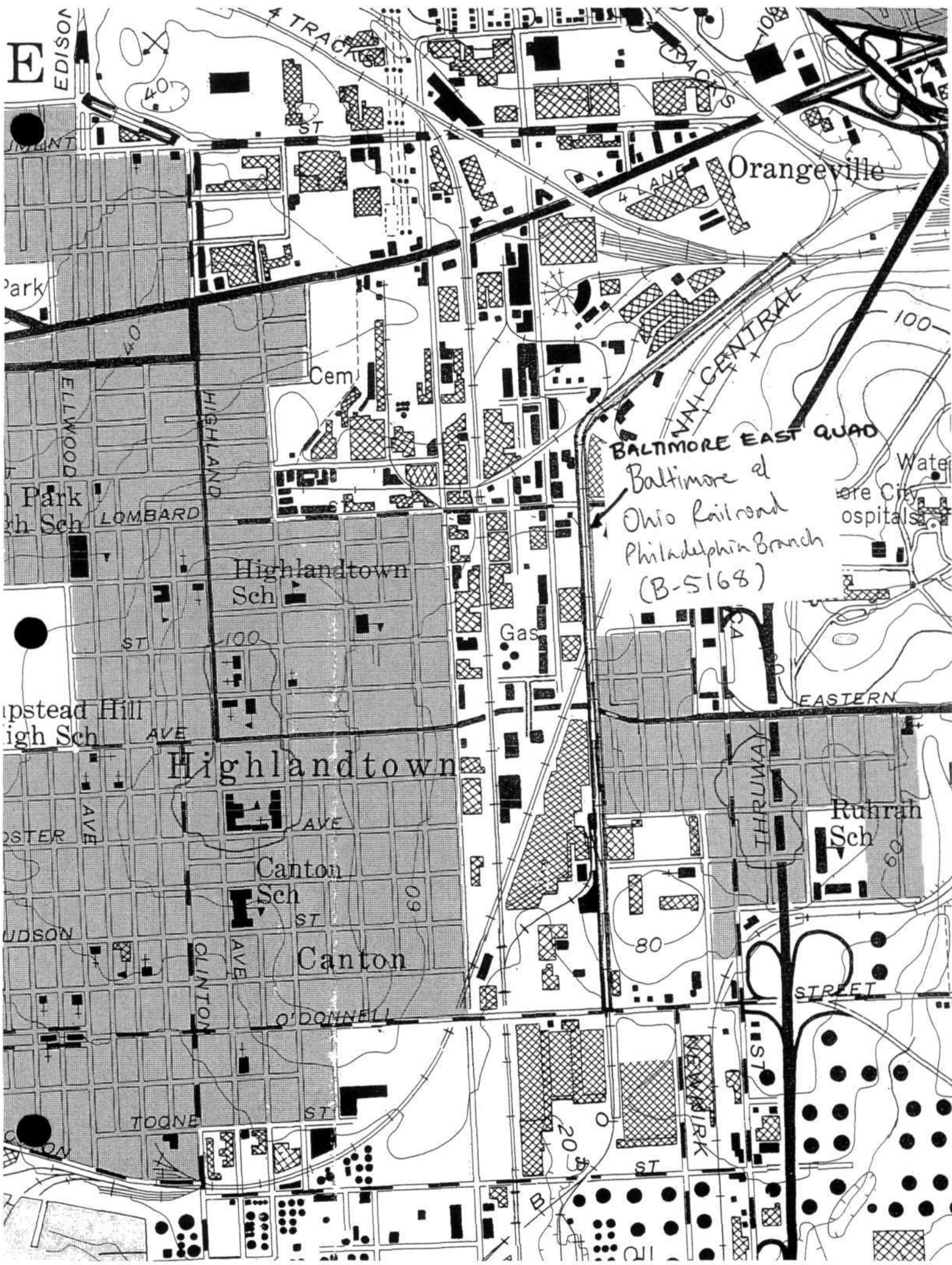
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Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Reviewer, National Register Program

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Date





E  
EDISON

Park

Park Sch

upstead Hill High Sch

OSTER AVE

UDSON

ELLWOOD  
HIGHLAND  
LOMBARD

Highlandtown Sch

Canton Sch

Canton  
O'DONNELL

4 TRACKS  
ST  
Cem

Gas

THRUWAY

ST  
ST  
ST

Orangeville

BALTIMORE EAST QUAD  
Baltimore &  
Ohio Railroad  
Philadelphia Branch  
(B-5168)

Ruhrsch Sch

ST  
ST  
ST

100

Water  
ere City  
ospital

60

STREET

100

80

20

ST

SIDEWALK  
ENDS  
  
USE  
OTHER  
SIDE

HOLLAND  
CO  
COLUMBIA  
AT THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 100 AND ROUTE 101  
HOLLAND CO. COLUMBIA, MO. 64501



B-5168

Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Philadelphia Branch

Baltimore City, MD

K. Farnham

10/2009

MD SHPO

View looking W. on O'Donnell St toward 1953 overpass

# 1 of 7



B-5168

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Philadelphia Branch

Baltimore City, MD

K. Farnham

7/2008

MD SHPD

Overpass above original trajectory of Eastern Ave, view to W

# 2 of 7





B-5168

Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Philadelphia Branch

Baltimore City, MD

K. Farnham

7/2008

MD SHPO

View to N from vicinity of Eastern Ave.

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B-5168

Baltimore at Ohio Railroad Philadelphia Branch

Baltimore City, MD

K. Farnham

10/2009

MD SHPO

view to NE of ca. 1885 Highlandtown Truss Bridge,  
from South end of S. Kresson St

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B-5168

Baltimore at Ohio Railroad, Philadelphia Branch

Baltimore City, MD

K. Farnham

10/2009

MD SHPO

view to W of Lombard St showing BALD overpass

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Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Philadelphia Branch

Baltimore City, MD

K. Farnham

10/2009

MD SHPO

View to SE of elevated line at retaining wall at  
former car plant on Fayette St.

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B-5168

Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Philadelphia Branch

Baltimore City, MD

K. Farnham

10/2009

MD SHPO

View to E of ca. 1885 Bayview Truss Bridge, taken  
from former car plant on Fayette St.

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